

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Government Reform Committee Approves

D.C. Omnibus Authorization Act

Act Would Promote Efficiency and Discourage Appropriation Riders

Washington, D.C. – The Government Reform Committee today unanimously approved H.R. 3508, “The 2005 District of Columbia Omnibus Authorization Act,” a bill which includes several important reforms to the District of Columbia government. This is the second year in a row Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) have introduced an omnibus authorization bill for the District to serve as vehicle for moving authorizing provisions that deal with either the D.C. Home Rule Act or federal law – things that require congressional action.

“Last year, we started a process whereby the committees with authorizing jurisdiction over the District would move legislation on a regular basis that would serve as a platform for the District to realize changes to the federal laws governing the District. Rather than making the Mayor go to the appropriators whenever he needs a change in authorizing law in order to better operate and manage his city, this legislation allows him to rely on his authorizers instead.

“This year’s legislation has a number of good ‘government provisions’ intended to help the city better operate and manage itself. Most importantly, this legislation would transfer almost all of the authorizing provisions that are historically carried in appropriations bills into authorizing statute so that these provisions will no longer need to be carried in appropriations bills. We intend to work with the city and the Senate to introduce authorizing vehicles every year or two to ensure that the federal laws governing the District are as up-to-date and responsive to their needs as possible,” said Chairman Davis.

The following is a list of provisions that would be enacted as part of the legislation:

- A law authorizing the District to spend up to 6 percent of unappropriated local funds in the event of unforeseen circumstances during the 2006-08 fiscal

years, without coming back to Congress mid-year during the supplemental process.

- A law allowing the District to tap into its emergency and contingency reserve funds, provided D.C. reimburses those funds.
- A revision of the pay cap for nonjudicial court employees to enable the courts to effectively implement a performance management system. This would put the nonjudicial personnel of the D.C. Courts on par with the nonjudicial employees of the federal courts in the District.
- Authority for the D.C. Courts to conduct business outside of the District in case of emergency.
- A permanent authorization for the District's Chief Financial Officer, as well as personnel authority and procurement authority for the CFO. The bill also requires that all legislation passed by the D.C. Council be accompanied by a fiscal impact statement.

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